REVIEWS


The question marks in the titles of these two books indicate what they share in their approach. In different ways, both demonstrate the gap between how successive governments have privileged ‘the family’ – seen as a married heterosexual couple living with their biological offspring – in social and legal policy, as compared with the change and diversity in ‘family’ relationships as they are actually lived today.

*The New Family?* is doubly welcome because sociological readers on family (as opposed to gender) relationships are still rare, and the book explores what people themselves describe as ‘family’, rather than taking ‘the family’ as a pre-given structure. A range of excellent, mostly qualitative empirical studies describe how ‘family’ behaviour (mainly housework and care) changes in different contexts and conditions, including: changes over time in work processes and domestic technology; gay and lesbian couples; divorced parents; step-kin separated by three generations, and migrating Afro-Caribbean families. These studies reveal that ‘family’ relationships are no longer necessarily seen as conjugal, co-residential, or heterosexual. With changing employment patterns, shifting gender relations, and increasing options in sexual orientations, they are becoming more diverse, both in response to changing conditions and as a source of wider changes.

Silva and Smart point to inconsistencies in how ‘the family’ is constructed in different areas of legislation such as the Children Act, divorce legislation, adoption and immigration. Overall, they argue that the focus of policy-making and research needs to shift away from what family members *should* do, and onto how individuals actually behave in ‘family’ relationships – that is, onto ‘family practices’ and how people ‘do’ family – with new policy frameworks aiming to enhance individual choice and autonomy.

In places, *The New Family?* is too deferential to Giddens, and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, who – unencumbered by empirical evidence – visualise relationships as becoming more voluntaristic and self-reflexive, providing a fluid context for the negotiation and reproduction of social and emotional capital, intimacy and personal autonomy. Such an approach runs the risk of understating those aspects of relationships which change only slowly. For example, although studies of lesbian and gay couples emphasise how the absence of traditional gender divisions permits the negotiation of a more egalitarian division of labour; these descriptions of ‘same sex friends’ do not address the variations of gender orientation and the sexual and erotic dimensions of power that may remain *within* gay and lesbian relationships.

Fortunately, Morgan (also in this book) argues that, while the concept of ‘family practices’ escapes from the straitjacket of family ‘structures’, such ‘practices’ are still influenced by ideologies of ‘family’ and constrained by their
location in particular cultures, historical contexts and personal biographies. An example of such deeper continuities is provided by Bornat and her colleagues who (building on Finch and Mason) describe how the negotiation of care between step-kin becomes ‘moralised’, less based on obligation and more on personal liking, but also (if possible) more feminised.

Another example of continuity comes from the study by Smart and her colleagues of ‘family’ relationships after divorce. Smart draws also on other research to stress how mothers not only provide the bulk of parenting in intact families, but also mediate their children’s relationships with their fathers. It may therefore be wrong-headed for divorce legislation to promote co-parenting as the ideal arrangement after divorce when it seldom existed before, and for the Children Act to assume that children’s relationships with individual parents are equivalent and unchanged after divorce. In fact, this and other research shows that many (although not of course all) men remain angry and uncomprehending after their wives divorce them, and use child support and access to try to regain their former power over their wives.

In *Absent Fathers?* Bradshaw and his colleagues attempt to challenge the hostile public and policy stereotype that non-resident fathers are insensitive men, absent from their children’s lives and determined to evade their emotional and financial responsibilities. Most of this book is given over to a detailed policy-focused statistical analysis of the first national survey of non-resident fathers. Meticulous comparisons with other surveys help to repair the bulk of the damage resulting from initial sampling problems, and in general the survey confirms that non-resident fathers who do not pay child support are often in straitened circumstances, while many others do indeed support and maintain some kind of contact with their children.

However, there are problems in the interpretation of some of these findings – although this is hardly surprising, since extensive US research has failed to elucidate the nature and impact of fathers’ ‘contacts’ with their children. The authors of *Absent Fathers?* seem to try to equate ‘fathering’ with ‘mothering’, and they puzzle over trying to reconcile the disparity between fathers’ high estimates of contact and support with their children, compared with lone mothers’ lower estimates in other surveys. Yet other research shows that although men tend to say they live and work for their families, they consistently overestimate their input to family life. And although married women collude with a ‘family myth’ of equality while they are still married, such collusion may end after divorce.

The small qualitative studies in this book provide fascinating insights concerning how fathers see negotiations over access and child-support. The father may come to see money as a major symbol of his ‘love’ for his child, so that problems arise when child support is taken over by the state and disappears into an impersonal transaction which (for all the father can do about it) may now support not his child but his estranged wife and even her lover! Seen in this light some men’s reluctance to pay child support becomes understandable. (Although the concept of reciprocity used here, fails to acknowledge the power struggles that sometimes continue between divorced couples.)

Sadly, Carol Stimson, the researcher on these qualitative studies, was tragically killed during the research. But it is clear that her contribution to the final
version would have much enhanced what is already a valuable study in the best Rowntree Trust tradition.

DENNIS MARSDEN
(Visiting Professor) University College Chichester


This is an impressive book. It covers a major amount of ground – analytically rather than descriptively – drawing upon a wide range of sources from the disciplines of social policy, sociology and cultural studies. Almost as soon as I started reading this book I marked out sections of the text to put on course reading lists. Soon I had so many markers that I moved on to contemplating which chapters to direct different students to. By the time I got to the end I realised that I was reading two books in one. The first book is the one to which the material explicitly refers and is concerned with the sub-heading of the text: the changing context of social policy in the postmodern era. This book is aimed at students and concerns itself with the question of how welfare should be organised and paid for, given that the context of social policy has changed radically in the last three decades. To address this question, the author proposes, students need to appreciate how sociological and cultural theory can aid analysis of the complex and unpredictable environment in which policy development now takes place. The author discusses various issues that contribute to this complexity, including post-Fordist economic practices, globalisation, shifting understandings of welfare obligations and social citizenship, the decline of state welfare and the growth of welfare pluralism, communitarianism, associational democracy, urban decay, crime, social exclusion and changing emotional and affective orientations discussed under the concepts of postemotionalism and amoral familialism. This extensive list gives a flavour of the breadth of the book. What gives it depth is situating these issues within the argument that runs through the book. Summarised briefly, the argument is that the combined effect of change has been to prompt a search for a new moral framework to guide policy development. This search is characterised by competing visions of a welfare society that are central to the contemporary politics of welfare. Three positions are of particular importance in this politics: modernists, anti-modernists and postmodernists. The chapters in the book detail how these positions deal with the issues in the above list and what is at stake in their discourses.

It is quite an achievement to cover academic writings across a number of disparate but related areas whilst at the same time maintaining an analysis that runs throughout the book. Modernists are defined by the retention of collectivist welfare aspirations (albeit in residual form) and an emphasis on the link between state and welfare. Anti-modernists look to nineteenth-century social and economic arrangements as a basis for welfare reform, aspiring to a severance of the links between state and welfare. Postmodernists emphasise the changing nature of contemporary society, its individualism and pluralism, and struggle with the tensions between universalism and particularism. These different positions are locked in a discursive and political struggle to shape the course of welfare in a
period of social transformation. One of the things I liked about this book was that, whilst detailing the economic, political and cultural changes impacting on Western societies in the postwar period, it concentrates on fleshing out the ‘social’ dimension of social policy, and how the social is subject to contestation and struggle. What I had more difficulty with is the ‘second book’, or at least what I came to think of as a second book.

Implicit in the text is the subject of the first part of the title, the movement from a welfare state to a welfare society. I think that this part of the argument is more implicit because it concerns proposing a model for social change. The model here is an evolutionary, modernist one – this is what ‘frames’ all the material. It is evolutionary because it subscribes to an analysis that posits a transformation from a modern to a postmodern condition. It is modernist because the structure of the analysis privileges the modernist position. Evolutionary models suffer from two main problems: the characterisation of past and present mechanistic accounts of transformation. In terms of the first problem, evolutionary accounts tend to overemphasise homogeneity in the past and over emphasise diversity in the present, ignoring continuities between them. Here, the narrative of modernity draws a picture of welfare development residing in the ‘principles of solidarity and pursuit of equality as a basis of welfare provision’ which has now given way to a postmodern welfare paradigm which substitutes the principles of pluralism, individualism and freedom of choice (p. 157). This claim is highly contentious, but is here asserted rather than demonstrated. Such an understanding of the modern/postmodern condition can only hold if one ignores accounts of welfare development from poststructuralist and neo-Marxist writers. For example, in very different ways, Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) points to an army of modern welfare professionals required to discipline populations, and Offe in *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (1984) to the role of social policy in exerting discipline through actively consulting the industrial proletariat by regulating entry and exit in the labour market. Both of these accounts are highly plausible and changes in contemporary social policy can be read and sustained through either of these frames. As a theory it is only as good as its critics, it is perfectly possible for Rodger to argue against them, but the point here is that the modernist account of welfare needs to engage systematically with its critics to establish any plausibility.

Similarly, the reading of the fragmented, plural nature of contemporary society can only be upheld by denying this diversity in the past. The point of postmodern theory has been to mount a critique of the universal subject in social theory (which is not at all the same as empirical questions of universal principles in welfare delivery). The critiques are concerned to draw attention precisely to this diversity in the past, a diversity that has been disguised by modern social theory’s construction of a universal subject of history that is premised upon the historical experience of particular social groups and societies but universalises from these particular experiences to a mythical unitary whole. The modernist project can only be seen in a wholly positive light if we ignore the relationships between the West and ‘the rest’, relationships characterised by imperialism, colonialism, domination and exploitation of subordinate peoples and nations. In short, if we ignore the relationship between the building of wealth and nation (and welfare) in the West through the labour of slaves, cheap labour on planta-
tions and so on. Feminist and black struggles were a part of modernity, not exclusive to current times. What has come to be labelled postmodern theory highlights the role of knowledge in upholding unequal relations, and the universal subject is one device through which the experience of subordinate peoples are ‘written-out’ of documented knowledge. But none of this translates into a critique of universal human rights or welfare entitlements. In fact, it is these very discourses that provide resources for struggle for equality.

The second problem of mechanistic accounts is related to this. To see the modernist origins of welfare lying in the need for social integration and compassion for the disadvantaged and the postmodern transformation as signifying an abandonment of these concerns begs the question of social actors in the transformation. It gives the impression of anonymous structural forces sweeping over populations, destroying all that went before. But a study of British social policy shows that the Beveridge plan, for example, always incorporated institutional mechanisms that reflect both anti- and modernist politics (universalism and means testing), both of which existed prior to Beveridge’s proposals. The emphasis accorded to each oscillates in different historical periods, but the politics surrounding them are firmly linked to social actors engaged in political struggle. I am sure that Rodgers would not deny this, but the social actors get rather lost in this account, lending the transition a mechanistic flavour. Analysing social policy documents from the European Commission shows how political struggle is firmly located in modernist discourses of social integration and justice that have absorbed the concerns of what Rodger labels postmodernists through recent initiatives in anti-discrimination, in relation to ethnicity, gender, disability and age, whilst hamstrung by neo-liberal economic policy: a thoroughly old-fashioned, modernist, structural contradiction of welfare?

SUE PENNA
Lancaster University


This collection of essays addresses itself to the theoretical and empirical coherence of class-based theorisations of welfare state regimes, arguing that if gender is taken into account, considerable variation within and across regime types emerges.

The regime types that structure the book and which are also the target of its critique are those developed by Esping-Andersen (1990) – the social-democratic, liberal and conservative-corporatist welfare state regimes. The first chapter explores variations in welfare state policies within conservative-corporatist welfare states. It focuses on social security, childcare provision and women’s participation in the labour market providing a detailed analysis of the similarities arising from the prevalence of the male-breadwinner model of social policy and the differences resulting from political challenges to this such as EC directives on gender equality and the women’s movement. There is some suggestion that these forces are provoking a move away from the gender regime associated with conservative-capitalist welfare states. The second chapter explores liberal welfare states and the way they have implemented strategies for gender equality in
the labour market. Here a distinction is made between individual, legalistic strategies and collective strategies which are explained by differences in the strength and structure of labour movements in these countries. These differences mean that Australia exhibits some characteristics associated with the social democratic welfare state regime. It is in the third chapter that the theoretical concerns of the book are made explicit and where the idea of gender policy regimes (male breadwinner, separate gender roles and individual earner-carer regimes) is explicated. In this chapter the policy regimes of the social democratic welfare states are analysed not only in terms of their gendered outcomes but also in terms of their conformity with one or another of these ideal-typical gender regimes. This analysis reveals that Norway differs significantly from Sweden, Denmark and Finland because of the influence of family obligations and that this can be explained by the different trajectories of the women’s movements and relative strength of social-democratic and more conservative political parties. What is interesting here is not so much that these four countries diverge in varying ways from Esping-Andersen’s social democratic regime (this is after all to be expected given the nature of ideal types) but that his model of welfare state formation is used (albeit in a gendered form) to explain variations within social democratic welfare states.

The rest of the book focuses on data across different types of welfare states. It explores social policies and their impact on maternal employment; the ways in which welfare states ‘structure women’s relationship to paid work and care’ with reference to lone mothers; taxation and the differential extent to which it is individually based; and gender equality in the labour market. These chapters present a wealth of empirical data and use it to interrogate Esping-Andersen’s welfare state typology. Although there is variation when different dimensions of gender are taken into account it is significant that the typology, at least on the basis of the evidence presented here, is not significantly undermined by a consideration of gender. Indeed, when employment is considered rather than policies concerned with caring, the typology is remarkably accurate. It is less so when different patterns of support for care work are taken into account, but even here the empirical variation noted by the authors does not lead them to argue that the typology has no value.

The final chapter assesses the extent to which empirical evidence of variation within and across welfare states calls for a reassessment of the way regime types are theorised. The evidence shows that on some policy dimensions gender ‘cuts across welfare state regimes’ and creates new clusters of welfare states but that these clusterings depend on which policies are examined and are not consistent. The evidence also shows an association between particular welfare state and gender regimes, thus the conservative regime and male-breadwinner gender regimes are linked, the liberal regime shows a weakening of the male-breadwinner regime and the social democratic regime is associated with an individual earner-carer regime. These conclusions suggest that Esping-Andersen’s typology is more sensitive to gender than has been appreciated hitherto. This chapter also emphasises the significance of politics in shaping policy regimes and the need to pursue policies which enable women and men to be carers as well as workers if greater gender equality is to be achieved. The strength of the book is that it provides convincing evidence that some policies are far more effective than others in
promoting gender equality and that these policies are linked to different welfare state and gender regimes. Moreover its comparative focus and attention to the need to combine theoretical insights with meticulous empirical analysis will make it very useful for teaching.


**NICKIE CHARLES**

University of Wales, Swansea


Les Back and John Solomos are to be commended for producing a Reader that will undoubtedly feature on every race relations/ethnicity course reading list in this country (and perhaps beyond – to the United States of America at least) as an essential reference point.

This is a treasure-trove of readings in the race relations field, with a selection of the historical pioneers such as W. Du Bois, Oliver Cromwell Cox, Robert Park, Ruth Benedict, Gunnar Myrdal and Frantz Fanon; a cross-section from the writers responsible for the academic development of the postwar sociology of race relations, including Michael Banton, John Rex, Stuart Hall and Robert Miles; and finally extracts from some of the writers involved in the more recent development of the field into new terrains of postmodernism, post-colonial discourse and feminist analysis, such as Homi Bhabha, bel hooks, Paul Gilroy, Lola Young, Patricia Hill Collins, David Goldberg and many others.

Reading through the extracts afresh and in one place, the overwhelming feeling for this reviewer has been a reminder of the sheer brilliance of some of the writing here; the excitement, interest and passion that the field of race relations has produced over the last century; the diversity, range and social importance of the material. To have attracted writing of such quality and originality is a clear mark of a field of study of enormous significance in both academic, personal and political terms.

Not only is there an excellent set of readings here, the editors have also produced a very helpful guide to those readings and to the field in general. Thus there is a valuable general introduction to the collection, and briefer introductions to each of the six sections into which the book is organised, as well as questions for the reader to consider in conjunction with the texts themselves; there is also a useful guide to further reading at the end of the volume. The editorial style is commendably clear and jargon-free throughout, making this a very accessible volume for the student. The only presentational quibble I would have is the lack of an immediate specific source for each reading, which has to be worked out from the list of acknowledgments at the beginning of the book.

The volume is organised into six sections (‘parts’), averaging six readings each: origins and transformation; sociology, race and social theory; racism and anti-Semitism; colonialism, race and the other; feminism, difference and identity; changing boundaries and spaces. Whilst most of these topics, and the authors used, are both fairly predictable and largely unexceptionable, though never dull,
it would be easy to criticise the Reader for the omissions of particular international authors who have made significant contributions to the field such as C. L. R. James, Aime Cesaire, Edward Said, Jan Pieterse, Stephen Castles, W. J. Wilson, Cornel West, Manning Marable, H. L. Gates Jr, Michel Wieviorka or Colette Guillaumin, as well as British writers who are perhaps unlucky not to have appeared, such as A. Sivanandan, Ali Rattansi, or Tariq Modood; but it would be invidious to suggest pieces that could have been left out from what has had to be an inevitably selective process given the constraints on space. On the whole, the parts are successful and include a range of valuable and stimulating contributions which will leave the student wanting to explore the texts and the particular subject-matter more deeply.

I was particularly pleased to see the editorial decision to include a section on anti-Semitism, including the writings of Adorno and Horkheimer, Mosse, Bauman and others. This is one of the more original aspects of the overall selection, which should have the important affect of ensuring that the study of race relations moves out from a dominant framework of anti-black racism into a more central concern with the full range of racisms that have troubled us, and continue to do so, including the anti-Semitic racism which has become of growing interest in recent times, both in terms of Holocaust studies and in comparative discussion of other more contemporary forms of genocide and racial violence.

It is perhaps the freshness of the editors’ approach in incorporating anti-Semitism so centrally into the theorisation of race that has led to the main disappointment I have felt in the volume as a whole, that is in the final part on changing boundaries and spaces. This tries to include both some empirical writings around the identity theme influenced by postmodernist analysis that go beyond the dominant Atlanticist focus of much of the book, and also some more explicitly political articles analysing the current post civil rights situation in the United States of America. But the section does not really work, in my view, in terms of either of these themes: adequate scope is not given to the salience and range of modern ‘changing boundaries’ of race or ethnicity, nor is there an authoritative stock-taking of the current state of play of anti-racist politics and equal opportunities policy. Thus the article on former Yugoslavia offers only a tantalisingly brief attempt to get beneath the surface of ‘ethnic cleansing’: there is nothing to provide some perspective on the brutal and long-standing ethnic politics of Rwanda; hardly anything on South African apartheid and its dismantling; no attempt to situate sectarianism and the peace process in Northern Ireland within a broader framework of ethnic conflict resolution; relatively little on the mobilisation of racism against a range of new ‘others’ – refugees, asylum seekers, Roma – in France, Germany, Austria, Eastern Europe or closer to home (Dover?).

In terms of theories of anti-racism, there are generally few pointers to what we have learnt by now about ‘institutionalized racism’, and how to tackle it, that can help ensure that the post-Macpherson interventions (arising from the death of Stephen Lawrence) do not simply provide a deja vu reinvention of the well-worn wheel of ad hoc, piece-meal initiatives, high-profile, tokenistic gestures, and the marginalisation of serious attempts at radical race equality change.
Thus the theories of race and racism that we are invited to consider seem, by the end perhaps, limited in their scope, involving something of a missed opportunity. The diversity of the subject matter, the political importance of the issues, and the openness of the editorial approach invite the possibility of an even broader theoretical sweep, encompassing wider theories of genocide, ethnic cleansing and comparative processes of racialisation, racial/ethnic conflict and anti-racist policy and practice. Some thoughts, perhaps, for the next edition of what will surely, and rightly, be a bestseller?!

GIDEON BEN-TOVIM
University of Liverpool


Is there anything new to be said about gender and power within the household? The contributors to this book draw together the existing literature on a variety of different aspects of the lives of individuals within households. They then go on to present new empirical data, from a number of different academic disciplines. The results suggest that there is much still to be learnt about the workings of the household and that research in this field can make a contribution to many other areas of study.

The book is divided into four broad sections. The first is predominantly theoretical and historical. Chapters by the editors and by David Morgan consider definitions of households and put forward the idea that the household is ‘a process rather than a once-and-for-all achievement’. The ‘gendering process’ takes place within every part of social life but is most significantly represented within the household, where it affects men just as much as women.

The second section is entitled ‘Gendered Care’. Vincent Duindam examines a group of Dutch fathers who take the major role in caring for their children. Susan Gregory shows how the preparation of food and meals is central to the gendering of family life. In a discussion of the domestic division of labour she illuminates this well-worked topic by suggesting that many of the women she interviewed saw themselves as ‘the person who undertook the tasks no one else wanted’. Julie Seymour discusses the ways in which married couples renegotiate their coping strategies when one of them becomes disabled.

‘Gendered Time and Space’ is the title of the third section. Janet Stephens writes about the time constraints which face mothers who work in hospital medicine. The evidence from her interviews leads her to conclude that many women experience a distinction between ‘earned time’ (paid work), ‘bought time’ (child care and domestic help) and ‘stolen time’ (or leisure). Time is also the focus of the chapter by Kay Standing on lone mothers and their involvement with schools. She shows how current government policy assumes that mothers will be available, both to help with homework and to get involved with school activities. In the case of lone mothers these demands on their time may conflict with the pressure to take paid work and may lead them to ‘choose’ low-paid, part-time work with few career prospects. In Gill Valentine’s chapter the focus is on space and on the ways in which children negotiate with their parents over the
right to play outside the household. She shows how new narratives of gender performance – the ‘sensible girl’ and the ‘dizzy boy’ – can reinforce other gendered narratives, for example, about school success. Women’s access to leisure is examined by Sarah Gilroy, who shows that female leisure continues to be constructed around the schedules of others and around the roles of housewife and mother.

The fourth section is concerned with ‘Gendered Work, Income and Power’. Sara Arber uses the General Household Survey to examine earnings inequality in dual-employed couples. She shows that gender inequality in earnings continues, even among childless and younger women; ironically, given the feminist emphasis on paid work as a route to financial independence, financial equality is greater among retired couples, because of the state pension. Decision-making in dual-career households is the topic of the chapter by Irene Hardill, Anna Dudleston, Anne Green and David Owen. Their results show that even in these highly educated, work-rich households the man had the lead career in two-thirds of couples. Finally, Anne Corden and Tony Eardley investigate resource allocation in self-employed households and underline the diversity and complexity of these households. Women’s involvement in the family business can reduce their opportunities for labour market participation and so their intra-household power, but if that involvement takes the form of book-keeping for the business it can actually increase their power.

The material presented in this book suggests that, though in general men’s greater economic power continues to shape the gendering process, the relationship between gender and power is never straightforward, is frequently contested and is constantly changing. The book as a whole makes it clear that detailed empirical research on households can contribute enormously to our understanding of such diverse topics as leisure and play, employment and self-employment, and the impact of government policy.

JAN PAHL
University of Kent at Canterbury


Social policy is slowly coming to terms with ethnic diversity and its implications for British society. Years of neglect mean there is much catching up to do. Too many university courses still pay the subject scant regard, while much research, by default, focuses on the ‘white’ population, without exploring any possible similarities and differences with different minority ethnic groups. This excellent book, however, begins to address these problems and ensures no one has an excuse for continuing to ignore the multiethnic nature of modern Britain.

*Race and Ethnicity in Modern Britain*, first published in 1995, has been rewritten to take into account developments over the last few years. The most significant change is a new section on the criminal justice system in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry. In most of the other chapters, it is a question of updating statistical information and introducing recent debates about inequality, ethnicity, race, diversity and citizenship. This book echoes the strengths of the earlier edition. It offers an accessible and wideranging account of race and
ethnicity in Britain, which combines informed conceptual and theoretical discussion with an exploration of particular policy areas.

The book begins by clarifying concepts and terms: an important starting point in discussing race and ethnicity. Issues of dispute and controversy are handled especially well and the author usefully reminds us that there are no races in the biological sense. Rather that social interactions are constituted by their participants as embodying a particular type of social relationship: race. In the same way, he conceptualises ethnicity as a relational concept. The existence of one ethnic group thus presumes another. Ethnicity does not simply apply to minority groups living in the United Kingdom, but is also of significance when making sense of the experience of the majority ‘white’ population. Ethnicity is both a matter of how people see themselves and of how they are defined by others. The two chapters that follow provide a good historical account of migration and immigration control. This is then used to explain the present patterns of ethnic diversity in Britain. The next five chapters address key policy topics, including employment, education, housing, health and criminal justice. These chapters are followed by a broader examination of citizenship, in which the substantive rights of Britain’s minority ethnic citizens are reviewed. The final chapter engages with emerging trends. It specifically examines new patterns of inequality and exclusion and ends by arguing that the choice we face is between fearing difference or embracing diversity.

The author admits that the book is not intended to be comprehensive and this, given the overall coherence of his account, should not be seen as a weakness. This concern with conceptual issues, for example, enables the reader to apply ideas to those policy areas not specifically explored in the text. The inclusion of an annotated bibliography at the end of each chapter will also enable readers to follow up issues in more detail. Nonetheless, the book could perhaps benefit by exploring social care, particularly since this could be used to introduce ideas about family obligation and relationships. Family life is at the heart of social policy and a thorough discussion could add to the conceptual and theoretical insights generated by the book. In the same way, I would have liked the book to say more about the current interest in identity and cultural reproduction. How do young people, for instance, make sense of the different influences on their life and to what extent does this make them different from their parents? Further, the book only briefly considers race and ethnicity within the broader context of gender relationships and social class. Again, reflecting on these debates would produce valuable insights into how we use ethnicity to make sense of the social world.

These observations, however, do not distract from the overall excellence of an impressive text. This authoritative and well-grounded account continues to offer the best introductory text to ethnicity and race in modern Britain. For these reasons alone, it deserves to be widely read. The book not only reminds us that race and ethnicity should be integrated into the mainstream concerns of social policy but also shows us how this can be done.

KARL ATKIN
Centre for Research in Primary Care
University of Leeds

This book poses interesting questions about the relationship between feminist social movements and the state, and of both to changes in social policies. Early work by feminists on social policy tended to see policies acting upon women. The issue of women’s agency has always been more muted in the analysis, although there has been a considerable attempt to address it by historians, historical sociologists and political scientists.

Charles reviews (briefly) theories of the state and, very usefully, theories of new social movements before looking at a number of policy areas: equal opportunities, poverty, domestic violence, abortion and family policies, particularly child care. She tries to assess how far social policy change is caused by social movements, and the extent to which both new policies and social movements are a response to socioeconomic and cultural change. On the basis of her case studies she concludes that it is impossible to generalise. She suggests that socioeconomic and cultural change result in behavioural change, to which the state may respond, thereby pre-empting social movements, or delay, thereby providing the space for social movements to emerge.

Many of the insights in respect of particular areas of social policy are convincing. For example, with regard to child care policy, Charles argues that feminism has not been successful in arguing for child care as a right. Where child care provision is good, for example in Scandinavia, it has been conceptualised as an employment-related issue. (It should perhaps be added that the pedagogical arguments in favour of child care have also been crucial in Scandinavian countries.) On abortion, while the picture in the United Kingdom has been one of alliances between feminists and the medical profession, in Italy the feminist movement played a much more independent role in securing policy change. As Charles notes, feminist social movements have worked at the cultural level of changing meanings as well as attempting to change the distribution of resources, perhaps most notably in respect of male violence. However, meanings all too often remain contested, thus the idea of ‘family violence’ threatens to obscure the idea of violence as an abuse of male power.

Charles is very aware of the problems feminist campaigners face in terms of co-option and compromise. Efforts to secure both role equity and role change are at risk in this respect. But there is a tendency if anything to underestimate the enormity of the difficulties. For example, Charles criticises the report of the Commission on Social Justice for paying insufficient attention to gendered inequalities in the home. Yet relatively speaking, the Commission made many radical suggestions and Charles fails to mention both the wider political issue surrounding it and the fact that in the event its findings were for the most part shelved. The analysis in the book does not always take account of the layers of political compromise and contestation in which feminist campaigning is inevitably embedded, or the difficulties that therefore exist in even deciding on a feminist strategy at all. In the case of abortion campaigners, as Charles notes, ‘pro-choice’ advocates in the United States must deal with a large movement of women who have a wholly different worldview. What is useful about this book is that it invites discussion of these troublesome issues and of the ways in which feminist social movements have made a difference.

JANE LEWIS
University of Oxford

Mordechai Rozin has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the mixed economy of welfare in nineteenth-century England. The focus of his study is the institutions of Jewish welfare that operated in London. Not surprisingly, therefore, a considerable amount of his study is devoted to the Jewish Board of Guardians founded in 1859. On that particular aspect, he provides a considerable insight into the Board’s activities and a much more critical perspective than Lipman’s largely self-congratulatory study published forty years ago to mark the centenary of the Board’s foundation.

One of Rozin’s strengths is the context he provides for his discussion of the Board’s activities: the Colquhoun-van Oven and Faudel schemes of earlier in the century; the increase in the number of Jews living in London – from about 15,000 in 1800 to 186,000 in 1914; the accumulation of tremendous wealth by the Jewish elite, and with it political influence and social status.

It was the members of this elite – often referred to as ‘the cousinhood’ – who stamped their individualist and *laissez-faire* beliefs on their philanthropic institutions – the Jewish Board of Guardians in particular. As Rozin puts it ‘the class interests of the elite overrode their ethnic solidarity’ (p. 217). Thus, discrimination between the ‘deserving’ and the ‘undeserving’ was an important element of the Board’s strategy: the limiting of assistance only to those who satisfied the six-month rule was designed to prevent immigration, speed transmigration or encourage repatriation; meanwhile use of the Poor Law provisions, such as parish workhouses, were regarded by the elite both as suitable for some groups and beneficial in their economy. Similarly, the Board’s related responsibility for medical relief, inherited from the metropolitan synagogues, was soon shifted onto the metropolitan hospitals and Poor Law union infirmaries. Rozin’s study thus suggestively indicates the close interrelationships of ideas about poverty and its punishment between the Jewish elite and nineteenth-century political opinion, and a not uncontroversial interdependence between the public and religious agencies of the period.

There are three other facets of Rozin’s account that warrant attention and where I would have welcomed a fuller and more detailed discussion.

First is the changing class relations between the wealthy Jewish elite and – especially after the East European pogroms from 1880 – the progressively immiserated condition of the immigrant Jews settling in London’s East End. This geographical, social and economic distance and separation is integral to Rozin’s account; but it could have been given more emphasis, drawing on the considerable literature which now exists on London’s East End in the late nineteenth century.

Second, Rozin makes much of the Jewish elite’s ideological constancy. That, in a sense, makes it the more necessary for him to analyse and explain the fissures and changing directions within the Jewish philanthropic tradition. Those divisions are best symbolised by Nathaniel Rothschild and Samuel Montague in the 1890s; the former representing the tradition of paternalist philanthropy expressed in his Four Per Cent Industrial Dwellings Company, otherwise known as Rothschild Buildings; the latter who ‘accepted communalism as a means of
social control which would aid in the gradual absorption of the immigrants’
(p. 207).

Third, in common with many studies of nineteenth-century welfare, Rozin
reminds us of the absence of ‘the voices of the poor’. At some points in his narra-
tive, he is able to recreate them via press reports and Board minutes. But perhaps
of more significance, he describes – albeit briefly – some of the alternative
sources of help and assistance which the Ashkenazic Jews of the East End offered,
not as philanthropy but as mutual aid – temporary loans, help with accommo-
dation and employment. It was this tradition of ‘family and charitable relief of
coreligionists’ that the young Beatrice Potter (later Webb) reported on in her
studies of the East End. And in many respects, as Rozin starkly portrays, it was of
a different order from the controlling philanthropy of the Jewish elite.

Paul.

DAVID GLADSTONE
University of Bristol

Julian E. Zelizer, Taxing America: Wilbur D. Mills, Congress and the state,
How can one adequately grasp the economic policy of the American federal gov-
ernment from 1945 to 1975? It is important first of all to see the historical con-
text of such development. The US government during the Great Depression and
World War II initiated and expanded a great number of federal programmes –
labour and labour union protection, old age pensions, unemployment compen-
sation, rural development and social welfare. These programmes epitomised a
new relationship between the federal government and its citizens. Increased
economic growth after World War II, due largely to military spending related to
the Cold War, enabled Congress to benefit many diverse groups in the nation
without increasing taxes.

It was not at all certain after World War II that the continuance and expan-
sion of the vast number of federal programmes created during 1933–45 would
continue. Several challenges continued to pose obstacles to this process. To start
with, the nation’s anti-government culture influenced both politicians and citi-
zens to resist any significant expansion of federal government. The historical set-
ting of the nation – its birth as a challenge to strong government – was that of
popular sovereignty, local government, individualism, and emphasis on minimal
taxation. And when domestic federal programmes were enacted, they were typi-
cally administered locally, underfunded, stigmatised, and vulnerable to cut-
backs. The separation of powers and the lack of a centralised governance made
public policies very vulnerable to the influence of interest groups. This situation
meant that great effort was required by those seeking to maintain public policy
in the long term. Zelizer focuses on a question not typically investigated by writ-
ers dealing with the thirty years of federal domestic economic policy after World
War II – how American national government achieved what it did, in spite of the
obstacles it had to face. He stresses that researchers and scholars are not aware
of the accomplishments of federal policy after 1945, concentrating on policy fail-
ures rather than what was actually achieved. This author cites Skocpol’s work

The author provides us with four basic answers to this question. First of all, Congress played a very significant role. During this period, Congress controlled tax policy through the committee system, which developed into a sheltered, closed-off area where representatives of both parties and competing groups could work out compromises. Committee chairs were dominant, scheduling committee agendas and managing bills through Congress. Thus, though traditional sources of Congressional leadership, such as Speaker of the House of Representatives, had declined by World War II, the power of committee chairmen grew strong, due to their dominance of particular policy areas. Chairmen gave continuity to American government and were powerful at all stages of policy formulation. Second, policy committees such as those concerned with tax matters, and including diverse groups such as political parties, think tanks and financial interests such as the business community worked closely with Mills. These groups as a unit pragmatically structured and funded, for instance, old age pension plans acceptable to the anti-government culture, old age pensions, as well as developing periodic programmes of tax reform, and formulating and revising tax policy in such a way as to positively influence the growth of the national economy. The ‘pay as you go’ funding of old age pensions thus helped ensure broad middle-class support by avoiding the use of income taxes for this purpose. Third, Mills stressed, as chair of a tax-writing committee, the relevance of taxation to both social welfare and economic policy. During the period from 1945 to 1975, Mills and the tax commission changed the direction of federal taxation from the raising of tax revenue into a way of both designing government benefits, and managing economic growth. Finally, fiscal conservatives, including Mills, supported moderate tax reduction while stimulating economic growth. Fiscal conservatism by the 1960s involved support of a federal government that used moderate tax reductions, even though this resulted in occasional deficits. These conservatives also supported general revenue expenditures as well as old age pensions. There was thus support, albeit hesitant, for this type of central government.

The incentive for the qualified support of fiscal conservatives was that it would increase their support among moderate Republicans and Democrats while simultaneously enabling them to defend fiscal restraint. These conservatives still held to their commitment to limiting the long-term growth of the federal government by means of fiscal constraint. In sum, Mills tried to foster federal aid affordable to the nation, but without moving towards the welfare state approach. Mills’ contribution to American federal fiscal policy is that he sought to balance social programmes and social policy with fiscal restraint. He worked tirelessly with interest groups, members of his committee, and fiscal conservatives in building social programmes benefiting both special interests and the general public. The efforts of Mills and his colleagues have provided a legacy to recent (and future) presidents and Congresses: that of working diligently to craft fiscal policy constrained by fiscal limitations while at the same time providing for the needs of the citizenry – education, old age pensions, unemployment and welfare.
Zelizer provides us with a welcome corrective to the undue pessimism focusing on the failures rather than the accomplishments of social and economic policy during the post-World War II period.

WILLIAM M. CROSS
Illinois College,
Jacksonville


There are two interconnected aims to *Experiments in Knowing*. First, Oakley seeks to develop a gendered history of knowledge, cataloguing and explaining how masculinity and femininity were inscribed in the development of science and methodology. This is, she argues the root of the quantitative versus qualitative ‘paradigm war’. Second, the book is also a political manifesto to (re)claim experimental research for social science. Oakley argues that social science needs to develop ‘reliable and democratic ways of knowing ... to ensure that those who intervene in other people’s lives do so with the utmost benefit and least harm’ (p. 3). *Experiments in Knowing* is particularly concerned with the basis of such interventions. Oakley argues that feminist social science has been central to the critique of experimental and quantitative research, yet has much to benefit from their practice. Resistance to quantitative and experimental research is ideological – and we can trace it back through the history of knowledge development. Experimental methods are valid tools for social science for they ‘can make an important contribution to the kinds of knowledge in which not only academics, practitioners and policy-makers, but also the public at large, are interested’ (p. 323). She is critical of post-modernist approaches for a range of reasons, but particularly because they do not ‘promote the goals of either an emancipatory social science or an informed evidence base for social and policy interventions’ (p. 323). She goes on to argue: ‘Reality exists, and although we do not all see it in the same way, we share an interest in being able to live our lives as well as we can, free from ill-informed intervention and in the best knowledge we can gather of what is likely to make all of us most healthy, most productive, most happy and most able to contribute to the common good’ (p. 323).

I will discuss later how far *Experiments in Knowing* achieves these two aims, but first I want to explore how Oakley goes about her task. The book is divided into four sections. Part I, Modern Problems, establishes the central problematic: on the one hand there is this gendered war between ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ methods (chapter 2 explores the nature of this war) with both sides positioning themselves in relation to each other, while on the other hand there are very real problems with validity and reliability in both (chapters 2 and 3 discuss the critiques each camp offers of the other). So it is a war that cannot be won. Oakley argues there is no explanation for this war other than ideology, for it makes no academic sense.

Part II, A Brief History of Methodology, maps out how this ideological positioning has emerged. The first three chapters in this section provide a fascinating read, charting the development of ideas from the fourteenth through to the twentieth centuries, and for my money are the best in the book. They introduce
the reader to key thinkers: Copernicus, Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, Margaret Cavendish, Hobbes, Condorcet, Quetelet, Graunt and Petty, Florence Nightingale, Anne-Louis-Germaine de Staël, Booth, Beatrice Potter (later Webb), Comte, J. S. Mill, Spencer, Meyhew and Rowntree. Others, for example, Newton, Bowley, George Eliot and Durkeim, make back-stage appearances. (That I felt it necessary to use women’s first names to sufficiently identify them neatly illustrates Oakley’s gendered reading of this history.) Oakley deftly synthesises a vast combination of ideas and detail into an illuminating travelogue of thought and knowing. Chapter 7, the fourth chapter of section 2, enters into a history of experimental knowledge and attempts to control ‘the wayward influences of chance’ (p. 160). This chapter fits with Oakley’s goal to argue the case for experimental social research and it provides a good introduction to the development of statistical method. However, its location in this section does jar somewhat. I think this is because by the end of chapter 6 there are many possible routes to take the reader and Oakley does not make enough of a case to follow the path that she elects.

Part III, Experiments and their Enemies, follows chapter 7’s signpost, concentrating as it does on social science experimental research. Again, historical development is central and Oakley examines the relationship between ‘natural’ and ‘social’ scientific experimentation and early twentieth-century examples. We then turn to American experiments of the 1960s and 1970s – such as Negative Income Tax, Living Insurance for Ex-prisoners and Transitional Aid Research Project. Results of many of these were often unclear and/or counter-intuitive. This led to a disillusionment with social policy experiments and an end to the ‘golden age of evaluation’ (p. 199). Oakley explores the political and academic responses to this experimental era, concluding that while there were problems with levels of expectation, research design and interpretation of results we should not exclude social science experiments as an option in developing policy interventions and the desire to do so is ideological:

From today’s vantage point, it is certainly possible to say that the primary lesson of the American experience is that rigorous evaluations of public policy and other social interventions can be done, but there are many respects in which they could have been done better than they were. A more broadly based social science approach, more ethnographic and process data, the testing of simpler interventions, and more attention to the expectations of the groups studied, particularly in relation to study design, would all have improved the capacity of the experiments to illuminate important policy questions ... No research method works quite as smoothly in practice as it does in text-books, but there seems to be a particular impetus to reduce the real-life complications of systematic social experimentation to a simpler message: it does not work. The same conclusions are not drawn from reports of large-scale quantitative surveys, which just as often encounter problems ... or for research designs which focus on the collection of ‘qualitative’ data and can present severe challenges of credibility. (pp. 289–9)

Part IV, Moving On, looks to bring into focus the implications for contemporary social researchers, and the possibilities that an ‘experimenting society’ (p. 291) offer democratic and emancipatory futures. Part of her vision for the
future is an academy without paradigm wars, a key strategy being to ‘drop the language of “quantitative” and “qualitative” approaches altogether’ (p. 303) – though she offers no alternative language. Another central dimension of her vision is for feminism to embrace ‘quantitative’ and experimental ways of knowing, arguing that there is an aversion to using and understanding this form of data – and in the process seems to reduce the complexities and range of feminist social research. Oakley makes no mention of other feminists who are currently engaged in these debates – for example, Sylvia Walby, who has called for greater quantifiable knowledge about gendered shifts in and around employment, education and political representation in her book Gender Transformations. While I agree with Oakley that there needs to be a greater emphasis on ‘what works’ in social research, the final part of this book is the weakest, for she presents her arguments as if she is the lone individual who has access to this privileged knowledge and understanding. As a sympathetic reader I found myself being positioned: one is either for experimental ways of knowing or opposed to emancipatory social research. Others, more critical of her position, might find this tone too admonishing.

Does Oakley achieve her two aims? With reference to the first – to chart a gendered history of knowledge and paradigmatic conflict – the answer is an indubitable ‘yes’. This section of Experiments in Knowledge is a superbly well crafted and humorous read, making clear developmental links between ideas, knowledge and thinkers. With reference to the second aim – the call for experimental social research – my answer is more qualified. Yes, she makes a profound and robust argument for social experimentation. But there are three points that mediate her message. First, at times she adopts a hectoring and judgemental tone that seems contradictory to her goal of paradigm peace; indeed, this kind of positioning can reinforce warmongering. Second, there are occasions when the reader is unable to engage with her position, for she makes statements without providing rationales or evidence. For example, in seeking to illustrate hidden depths of experimental social research Oakley discusses one American voting experiment and concludes that the observations of ‘watchers’ were ‘invaluable in interpreting the results’ (p. 177). One immediately wanted to know how, in what way and to what extent, but there was no further analysis. In another example, arguments against randomised control trials for evaluating social interventions are briefly rehearsed and then dismissed with the sentence: ‘Boruch argued persuasively against these notions’ (p. 317). Again, I wanted to know at least the outline of Boruch’s counter-argument, but it was not forthcoming. Of course, one could and should follow up all the references she provides: but in a book so packed with detail it is incongruous to lose detail at such seemingly crucial moments.

Thirdly, although chapter 11 is devoted to a frank discussion of the ethics of experimental social research and the failure of previous experiments to attain appropriate ethical practice, I would have welcomed a fuller discussion of the politics of experimental social research. By which I mean New Labour’s evidence based policy research agenda, the funding of experimental programmes, and the expertise of researchers. The implications of the current fashion for ‘evidence based policy’ is not addressed, nor are the full range of experiments that are actually under way (for example, the tranche of Home Office crime prevention
initiatives). How is this affecting the practice and ideology of academics and a wider policy community? What are the problems? Can any government really be led by research evidence, given political constraints of adopting unpopular policies? How much is the drive just one more PR exercise; as David Walker points out, there are ‘umpteen examples of New Labour policies not led by evidence’. Funding is briefly mentioned, but I wonder how ready the ESRC, the Leverhulme Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, for example, are to fund truly experimental social research (i.e., randomised control trials) given the ethical minefield that it presents (and which Oakley acknowledges). Lastly, who has the expertise to carry out experimental research? I know of no training programme for research students or academics that currently provides access to the requisite skills. For all the ‘real world’ claims that Oakley makes throughout Experiments in Knowing, she does not fully engage with many of the practicalities necessary to achieve her vision.

It is not possible to do full justice here to Experiments in Knowing; this book is a tour de force, big in every sense. It is long, it is dense and intensely argued, and it covers an impressive scope from fourteenth-century scholarship to present day debates. To conclude, I want to emphasise the comprehensive nature of the book and the validity of the problems and questions that Oakley raises. Her ideas deserve and need to be debated by all of us who do seek to contribute to social improvement – in whatever form this takes. It is a book I wish I had been able to read in my first week of being a Ph.D. student, and will certainly be required reading for my students in future.


HAZEL MAY
University of Leeds


This ambitious book asks whether ‘progress in gender relations’ has been made in the last fifteen years, whether policy can help this process, and which theories help us to understand this process. The authors are lecturers in French and French Studies, so they compare France and Britain. They rely entirely on a literature review, with the addition of a comparative study by Windebank of 112 couples, 55 in Britain and 53 in France.

The book starts with a review of the research literature on women’s position in the labour market, their contribution to household work and to exchanges of services between kin and neighbours. This shows that the similarities between Britain and France outweigh the differences, and also that sex differentials are often small. The second section reviews all the theories – in labour economics, labour sociology, labour market analysis, and feminist debates – that might help explain the contemporary sexual division of labour in Europe. The third section presents an impassioned plea for a more equal sharing of caring work and domestic work by men and women, and suggests policies to promote this
objective. This is in fact the main theme of the whole book, which shapes the reviews in the other sections.

The authors reject the idea that employment equals liberation for women, and that women’s share of full-time employment is the best indicator of ‘progress’. Like many German feminists, they argue that (women’s) unpaid domestic work should be valued higher instead of being commercialised. They insist that it is not women, but men, who need to change, to do more domestic and caring work in the family. They recommend wholesale state social engineering to change male behaviour and force a new division of labour within the family, including: state propaganda and re-education (along the lines of the policies pursued with remarkably little success in Sweden in recent decades); a universal social wage; a universal right to work reduced hours or part-time hours (along the lines of the law introduced in 2000 in the Netherlands); and a complete reorganisation of market work, jobs and workplaces. Only as an afterthought do they admit that change within the family can also come about through women renegotiating the division of labour in their own homes – if they want this.

Inevitably, in trying to cover so much ground, the reviews are partial, incomplete or abbreviated – even in the policy section. For example, the enormously successful new APE homecare allowance in France (the *Allocation Parentale d’Education*) is never discussed properly. The fact that the authors are linguists rather than social scientists also makes for weaknesses, especially in the research synopses. All types of data, study and theory are treated as if they are equivalent and of equal weight or equal compass. There are factual errors, misinterpretations of data and research results, and misunderstandings of theories.

For example, the authors underline, throughout the book, that women’s full-time work rates are much higher in France than Britain. In fact they are identical: in the late 1990s, in both countries, 38% of working age women worked full time. The similarity is of very long standing, with only small variations over the past 150 years (Hakim, 1996, p. 62). It is an article of faith in France that those women who do work have more continuous employment patterns – but this means that the one-third of women who do no paid work at all are also at home continuously. The picture is one of greater polarisation of lifestyles rather than greater commitment to careers in France. In Britain, virtually all women move in and out of jobs over the life-cycle, choosing part-time or full-time work because both are available, and husbands are more involved in family work than in France. National surveys also show that men and women in Britain are more likely to reject complete role segregation in the family, more likely to prefer egalitarian and symmetrical family roles than are the French (Hakim, 2000, Table 4.1). So it is not surprising that domestic work is more gendered in France than Britain. A sharper view of the evidence leads to a very different perspective on Franco-British comparisons.

Overall, there are too many factual errors and inaccuracies for the book to be recommended for social policy and sociology courses, although it would be admirable for gender studies and French studies courses. Scholars will find it a useful introduction to the literature on women’s work in France. However, it is more partial and patchy on the much more voluminous, and empirically based, British literature. Unfortunately, the book is poorly edited, so references in the text are missing from the bibliography.

Catherine Hakim
London School of Economics


*Work, Welfare and Poverty* is the first publication of the Institute for the Study of Civil Society, the relaunch of the respected right-wing ginger group, the Institute of Economic Affairs, Health and Welfare Unit. Sadly this collection of four disparate papers, plus forward and introduction, constitutes an inauspicious start for the new Institute.

The fundamental problem is that the volume has no clear rationale. The subtitle suggests that the aim is to draw lessons from recent reforms and the cover blurb suggests that ‘it is left to US contributors John Clark and Jay Hein to provide an example of welfare reforms that work’. The latter is disingenuous since only the chapter by David Smith seeks explicitly to analyse or evaluate new British policies – the New Deal and the ‘Working Families [sic] Tax Credit’ both of which he admits remain relatively young. Richard Pryke purports to demonstrate that ‘the real social problem is not mass poverty but the existence of an underclass in social housing’ (p. 44). Norman Dennis, in his turn, worries about the consequences of ‘the great social engineering project to free sex from consequences’, a project started in the 1960s but which ‘is still far from completed’ (p. 45).

In his introduction – the volume has no conclusion – Smith restates the content of each chapter with appealing brevity and rightly makes no attempt to pull together common themes from the chapters or to distil novel lessons. There are none (other than that each author believes that ‘welfare has created an underclass’ and ‘sapped incentive and honest effort’ (p. 5)). Smith is therefore forced into tub-thumping rhetoric. In Britain, he asserts, ‘welfare management and control – usually failed control over welfare spending – have been substitutes for welfare reform’ and that ‘Britain (and its politicians) probably deserves the welfare state that it has got.’

He also opines that ‘welfare reform is an area where politicians often appear incapable of seeing the wood for the trees. Perhaps they don’t want to. And, by identifying welfare reform too often with only welfare cuts, they risk giving it a permanently bad name’ (p. 1). He expresses the hope that the authors of the volume have avoided this trap, although one suspects that in mentioning this Smith realises that his collaborators have failed to do so.

Almost half of the book is given over to Dennis’s passionate but rambling lament on the dissolution of the Judeo-Christian family. This decline he variously attributes: to ‘better-off lone mothers … [who] propagate as public policy what works best for them’ (p. 53); to the aspiration to realise the ‘undergraduates’ revolutionary dream’ of ‘destabilizing capitalist society through sex and drugs’ (p. 45); and, most consistently, to ‘the project of the intellectual establishment’ based on ‘a hopeless factual, logical and moral muddle’ (p. 80).
What appears to concern Dennis most are the negative consequences of the new morality for children. These are often real but not always as clear-cut as he makes out since poverty and socioeconomic circumstances interact with living arrangements in complex ways (Hill and Yeung, 2000). He is also worried about the resultant lack of fecundity on the size of the economically active population. And by ‘the creation of a generation of poorly motivated young men’, ‘an unemployable male underclass’, with ‘no compulsion to care for their offspring’ (p. 55), something which Dennis might be relieved to learn is the exception rather than the rule (Walker with Howard, 2000).

What annoys Dennis is (his belief) that the political establishment has deliberately manipulated the changes in social morality. He takes out this annoyance on Labour’s consultation paper ‘Supporting Families’ and on Anthony Giddens, considered by him to be ‘the main exponent of current Establishment views on sexual regulation and child-rearing practices’ (p.64). He lampoons the consultation paper – the first by any government on ‘the family’ – for its ‘Third Way’ between ‘back to basics fundamentalism’ and ‘anything-goes liberalism’, that is, it seems, for not advocating that ‘the Judaeo-Christian marriage is superior to any other form of sexual and child-rearing arrangement (p. 63). Giddens is taken to task for slack scholarship – proven, if the quotations provided by Dennis are not selective.

Smith considers Dennis’s ‘polemic’ (Smith’s term) to be ‘so coruscating as to be entertaining’ (p. 5). However, Dennis fails to define his terms (what exactly is the Judaeo-Christian conception family that seems invariant in time and place?) nor explain what public policies could reverse current social mores and upon whose authority. Worse, he takes, for example, Freud’s Civilization and its Discontents as fact because it is ‘well known and influential’ (p. 69). His polemic seems more laughable than entertaining.

Pryke’s chapter similarly falls short on scholarship, name-calling substituting for analysis. ‘Poverty-wallahs’ – presumably people Pryke disagrees with – seek, he says, to show that ‘the extent of poverty is worse than it appears’ (p. 33). Due to ‘their flagrant bias and ideological preconceptions’ (p. 34) they fail to ‘draw useful and necessary distinctions’ or to enquire whether some people are persistently poor, and do not believe that incentives matter. He seems unaware of the literature on poverty dynamics.

Pryke takes Jencks’ (1991) four-fold definition of the underclass (one that places unmarried mothers and violent criminals on the same dimension) and selects evidence in support of his contention. He consistently ignores the selection bias and unobserved heterogeneity that confounds his analysis. Beyond the existence of Housing Benefit, he also neglects the structural factors – council house sales and the tighter entry qualifications for the remaining stock – implicated in the ghettoisation of local authority housing. He does not explain how the underclass, thus defined, is to be eliminated as he wants it to be.

Clark and Hein recount the familiar ‘success story’ of the 1996 US welfare reforms, but emphasise more than most the provision for faith-based organisations to provide services for welfare recipients without compromising their religious nature. This they refer to as the ‘re-emphasis on civil society’ which may give a clue to the re-branding of the IEA Health and Welfare Unit. They also admit that it has been ‘easy to “end welfare as we know it” because these days
it’s easy to chase people off welfare and into work’ (p. 22). Moreover, they identify the dominant question as how to ensure that a ‘job leads to increased wages and a career progression’ that takes people out of poverty.

Finally, Smith questions the efficiency of the New Deal – noting the deadweight costs – and suggests (echoes of Clark and Hein) that its real test will come with the next economic downturn. He ponders, too, the point of the Working Families’ Tax Credit (concluding it was a means to cloak increased government payments to low-income households). He identifies possible negative unintended consequences resulting from the Credit’s interaction with the National Minimum Wage, which might set a ceiling on wages. The irony is that the three policies that worry Smith were all closely modelled on the United States, the welfare system from which he believes Britain has so much to learn.


ROBERT WALKER
University of Nottingham


The ‘survival’ of the welfare state in Western Europe is the common theme underlying this book, which grew out of a session of the European Consortium of Political Research in 1997. The broad conclusion is that survival is not only possible but also ‘likely’. While challenges – internal and external – abound they are being met, albeit more successfully in some countries than in others. Successful reform, which would make the welfare state more capable of coping with and responding to new conditions, is more a matter of internal political and institutional capabilities rather than external constraints such as globalisation or Europeanisation. The book upholds the sustainability thesis against theories of ‘crisis’, ‘retrenchment’ and ‘dismantlement’.

In all, fourteen chapters are grouped together in three parts. In Part I an introductory chapter by Kuhnle and Alestalo puts the development and present status of the welfare states in perspective. Even in the 1980s and 1990s the story is one of growth, certainly in terms of expenditures but also in terms of institutions, especially in Southern Europe. The four major ‘social Europes’ or types of welfare states – the British, Continental, Southern and Scandinavian – represent different mixes of the major welfare providers, viz. market, state, family and civil society and it appears that the mix might be changing. In chapter 2 Kersbergen reviews current theoretical and empirical literature and brings a note of caution, if not dissent, to the survival-of-the-welfare-state thesis. New sources of pressure, e.g., the convergence criteria of EMU, have emerged in the
1990s while ‘creeping’ disentitlement could cumulate to substantial changes. The nature of piecemeal changes and their long-term consequences deserve more careful assessment.

Part II is the empirical core of the book. Eight chapters – some country studies, others comparative – address the problems, challenges and reform efforts, successful or otherwise, in the four ‘social Europes’ during the 1990s. From Eitrheim and Kuhnle on Nordic countries and Alestalo on Finland we learn that Sweden and Finland are in trouble, having made significant cuts in benefits, but Norway and Denmark are not. Goul Andersen’s chapter on Denmark shows that a large social-democratic tax-and-spend welfare state can get away with only minor reforms and positively flourish in the new economic order. Moreno on Spain and Ferrera on the Southern European welfare state, with special reference to Italy, are both highly informative and instructive on these somewhat less familiar welfare landscapes. Richard Parry shows that Britain may well remain Europe’s welfare laggard. Blair’s New Labour approach has put the Treasury in command to keep a tight lid on spending and prevent taxes from rising. Why reform failed in one country but succeeded in the other is the subject matter of Merrien and Bonoli’s chapter on France and Switzerland and Hemerijck et al.’s on Germany and Netherlands. Each offers plausible explanations of the different outcomes.

The four chapters in Part III are ‘supranational’. Falkner reviews the prospect of social policy catching up with economic integration in the European Union. Castles argues that for successful models of reform which help consolidate the welfare state Europeans will do better to look inward rather than to North America, Australasia or East Asia. Rothstein, in a discursive and normative contribution, discusses the case for the survival of the universal welfare state. Finally, Kuhnle draws together the conclusions from this collection of papers.

Overall, the book offers an engaging account of and commentary on the welfare state in Europe. The detailed discussion of developments, backed up by comprehensive statistics, in Scandinavia, Italy and Spain is of particular interest. On the theoretical level however the book is less satisfactory. The approach is pragmatic and eclectic and does not confront the more fundamental issues raised by the ambiguous notion of ‘survival’ and changes in the ‘welfare mix’. Moreover, counterposing ‘survival’ against ‘retrenchment’ is somewhat misleading in that the issue is hardly that of either the survival or the demise of the welfare state but one of relative shifts in the boundaries of welfare and their nature, causes and consequences. Besides, there is plenty in this volume which suggests that the jury is still out on ‘survival’. For example, the welfare states in Sweden and Finland have undergone substantial – and arguably ‘qualitative’ – changes (quite apart from learning to live with unemployment) and more changes may be in the offing. Thus, a more appropriate title for this book might be ‘The struggle for survival of the European welfare state’. In any case this is a well-edited collection of papers which makes a useful contribution to the debate.

RAMESH MISHRA
York University, Ontario

It would be fair to say that I approached this book with a degree of puzzlement and curiosity. The notes on the back cover start by telling us that ‘[w]e are not so much members of society as members of groups within society...’ Well, yes – nothing new here; even a non-sociologist would quickly recognise the truth of such a statement. The notes continue that the book ‘explores the structural differences and social inequalities that lie behind the commonsense formulations of a range of social divisions that go beyond the ‘big three’ of class, ‘race’ and gender. Right then, so this is intended to be a useful volume of short, authoritative and up to date accounts of various forms of social division? At first glance it seems so. Slightly more emphasis is given to the three major divisions, and the range of authors of the specially commissioned chapters is certainly impressive. John Scott covers ‘Class and Stratification’; Pamela Abbott deals with ‘Gender’; and the complexities of ‘race’ are effectively and appropriately covered in separate chapters on ‘Ethnicity’ (David Mason) and ‘National Identity’ (David McCrone). But the other social divisions covered also look pretty much as one would expect for a contemporary volume on this topic: there are chapters on ‘Age and Old Age’ by John Vincent; ‘Childhood’, and ‘Sexuality’ by Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott; and ‘Disability’ by Mark Hyde. More unusually there are also chapters on ‘Health’ by Judy Payne and Geoff Payne, and ‘Community’ from Graham Crowe and Catherine Maclean. These are perhaps more commonly considered as areas where the effects of social division are manifest rather than as social divisions in themselves, and the editor explains that though they can legitimately be viewed as social divisions *per se*, their utility here is in the demonstration of the interplay and effect of social divisions.

With the possible exception of these last two, this looks *prima facie* like a straightforward catalogue of the major social divisions currently recognised in sociological analysis and consequently in the core sociological curriculum. So what was the source of my puzzlement? Back to those cover notes, which end with the claim that the book’s ‘combination of more familiar and fresh material produces a distinctive new sociological perspective on contemporary society’ (my emphasis). Given that the structure of the book and its contents – interesting, authoritative and topical as they may be – look essentially unremarkable, this seems a big claim. It is a measure of the strength of the book that despite some initial scepticism, I was rapidly converted to the view that this is exactly what it does.

I am apparently not the first to have been slow to see the novelty of what Payne calls a ‘social division approach’ (e.g., p. 19) to thinking about society. He writes in the preface that this was not the primary objective for the book, that contributions were not commissioned with this in mind, but that from his position as editor he was able to see ‘the idea that social division represents a distinct sociological standpoint of some significance’ (p. xvi) emerging through those contributions. So what we have here is a series of distinct ‘topic’ chapters, each of considerable merit in its own right, bracketed by introductory and concluding chapters in which Payne argues persuasively – and for me convincingly – that a social division approach is both novel and worthwhile.

From the individual chapters Payne draws some unifying themes to elaborate this position, core amongst them being that social divisions form an interrelated
whole that includes all members of society. A social divisions approach therefore is a systematic concern with how those divisions function to produce a relatively stable, cohesive society despite the inequality and social injustice that goes with them. He explains this by pointing out that key social divisions are not immutable, but they do have the habit of persisting over time. Thus whilst class systems change, and women have better access to the labour market, and civil rights legislation is set up to protect black or disabled people, the fundamental divisions survive. This is because of the manner in which social divisions interconnect, and due to institutional constraints on the behaviour of people within those divisions. Whilst, as individuals, we each have the potential to act independently, in fact we modify our behaviour to comply with what is expected, both by those within the same social division, in the interests of group identity, and those outside whose identity is defined relative to other social divisions, whether oppositional or not. Since we are all members of multiple social divisions, we are all individually and collectively constantly negotiating our relative positions, but always within these constraints. Payne suggests that social cohesion is only threatened when the interests of diverse social divisions coincide, e.g., class with ethnicity or gender. The very complexities of multiple memberships of social divisions militate against fundamental change in those divisions.

The social divisions approach, with its focus on the shared aspects of identity, experience and material reality, offers a refreshing alternative to the potentially endless deconstructionism of post-structuralist and post-modernist accounts of individual identities. From this point of view the extent to which individuals can in truth pick and choose their identity in the ‘construction of their own biographies’ is significantly limited by their position within various social divisions. Despite its essentially structuralist approach, Payne points out that ‘social divisions’ is far from functionalist in that it challenges and seeks to reveal the practices and assumptions that create and sustain the status quo rather than simply to describe them. Likewise, in stressing the multiplicity of social divisions, it goes beyond the Marxian concern with class. As Payne puts it, ‘[s]ocial divisions, however well-defined each may seem to be at one level, are part of a conception of society as more messy, untidy, and hard to see than in most other accounts’ (p. 251).

My focus on the overall message of the book should not detract from its other qualities. It certainly succeeds at this level, but also the quality and coverage of the topic chapters makes them a valuable resource for students, and for those planning module content.

Having finished the book, I was left with the curious feeling that I knew about social divisions as a way of exploring society all along, but I needed this book to fully illuminate their significance.

TONY FAGAN
Edge Hill College


This short book stands in a long tradition of attempts to develop a comprehensive set of egalitarian principles from which policies designed to enhance social,
economic and political equality can be derived. Situated squarely within the boundaries set by mid-to-late twentieth-century British writers like Tawney, Crick and Plant, as well as the American liberal philosopher, John Rawls, the conceptual field covered by this volume includes ideas – ‘equal worth’, ‘fairness’ and so on – that will be well known to those acquainted with social democratic and democratic socialist thinking in Britain over the past sixty years. At its best, Wilson’s book offers a new interpretation and mapping of the theoretical links amongst these key egalitarian concerns; at its worst the discussion tends to lapse into New Labour-speak, the Foreword by Tony Blair not helping to reduce the impression of a semi-official party ‘statement of principles’.

Key to an understanding of Wilson’s approach are two related sets of moral principles. First, ‘deep equality’, the moral starting-point of which is ‘a belief in the equal intrinsic worth that resides in every human being, just as a human being’ (p. 13), yields six linked ideals intended as targets for governmental action. Each of these: ‘sufficiency’, equality opportunity, fairness, social equality, political equality and freedom from domination, expresses ‘a different and essential implication of equal human worth’ (p. 17) and offers ‘an empirical framework for describing and appraising the existing state of society, a practical framework for assembling policies into a programme of change, and ... a moral framework for mobilising the necessary groundswell of popular support’ (p. 19). Second, the notion of equal worth itself, is understood in four dimensions – need, action, potential and meaning – the argument being that ‘deeply equal arrangements must value each person equally in each of the four dimensions’ (p. 31), and, further, that these dimensions must be incorporated into policies designed to achieve each of the six ideals.

The bulk of the book is taken up with an attempt to illustrate how the four dimensions of equal worth inform an understanding of the six ideals to produce a multidimensional vision, egalitarian in intent if not always demonstrably so in substance. Wilson shows just how demanding a theoretical task it is to integrate all the dimensions with the ideal of fairness, to take one example. Suggesting that inequalities of income and wealth can be morally consistent with equal worth, he has to demonstrate how ‘an acceptable defence of [an] unequal situation’ can be ‘grounded in the attachment of a deeper equal value to all [people]’ (p. 100). Various arguments, Rawlsian and otherwise, are produced to justify this position, with some success (p. 101), at least in theory. However, the difficulty here stretches across the volume as a whole – the principles, though elegant in themselves and lucidly discussed, are rarely subjected to ‘acid-test’ cases. It might be possible, for instance, to adjust power relations in residential homes better to suit the demands of the egalitarian principles outlined here (p. 97); but how feasibly can this be done in the all-important economic sphere? Just how susceptible are the economically powerful to the pull of a moral appeal to equal worth? And just how committed would a centre-left government, faced with the persistent challenge of globalisation and declining domestic economic sovereignty, be to the prospect of encouraging (enforcing?) the adoption of this egalitarian agenda?

For those interested in what remains of social democratic thinking, and in equality in particular, this book contains some important material; it is certainly thought-provoking. Rather like New Labour, however, it never quite seems

This short and lucid text is an interesting successor to *Money and Marriage* and stimulates reflection on the way in which new technologies often reinforce, rather than change, traditional roles and relationships. It focuses on new forms of money: credit and charge cards, store/retailer, loyalty, debit, and automated teller machine cards, smart cards and telephone/computer and internet banking. These new ways of ‘holding, managing and spending money’ are examined within ‘the complex world of personal and household finances’ (p. 5).

Because money is a sensitive and private subject, three sources of data were used to discover how couples managed their money: quantitative data from the 1993/4 expenditure diaries of 3,676 married couples included in the Family Expenditure Survey; 7 focus group interviews including 59 individuals from different parts of England and face to face interviews with 40 couples. Both the quantitative and qualitative data suggested an increasing polarisation between those who use new forms of money and those who do not or cannot.

Cluster analysis of the FES data differentiated six groups of couples according to their age at the end of full-time education, income of each partner and employment status. Clusters ranged from cluster 6, which contained the most highly educated couples to cluster 1 in which a high proportion of couples were retired or living in households with no work. At one extreme 68 per cent of men in cluster 6 had used a credit card to make a purchase during the two weeks of the survey but only 8 per cent of women in cluster 1. This polarisation was also distinguished by different forms of financial management, with those in cluster 6 likely to engage in a ‘partial pooling’ of finances but those in cluster 1 sticking to traditional ‘wife management’ or ‘whole wage system’ patterns more typical of low-income families.

The research provides clear evidence of the persistence and extension of financial exclusion based on class and gender. For those on the lowest incomes or with poor credit ratings, lack of bank accounts, illiteracy and limited information all deny access to the electronic economy. To use Kempson’s phrase (in Kempson and Whitley 1998) these are ‘discredited’ people. Exclusion is compounded by closure of local bank branches, the disappearance of local shops and post offices and the cost of using available sources of cash – such as cheque-cashing shops and pawn-brokers. Although hope is held out for community banks and credit unions, development of the latter has been slow and patchy in England and has not reached the majority of those in need.

Gender also continues to be significant in financial exclusion. Within couples, women were more likely to use credit cards if in full-time work, but were likely to be excluded if working part time for a low wage or not in paid work. The study concluded that money continued to be male territory and that although new
forms of money might allow more individual independence they also enabled men to retain control over family finances.


SUE BALLOCH
University of Brighton


First and foremost, the arrival of this collection of essays from seventeen international experts in their fields, including the editors, has to be applauded. My own criminology students, among others, will soon be introduced to the text. However, innovative subject matter requires further discerning scrutiny.

What is cybercrime? The editors give the following definitions ‘can be regarded as computer-mediated activities which are either illegal or considered illicit by certain parties and which can be conducted through global electronic network’ (p. 3). They argue that its distinctiveness is derived from the versatile capabilities provided by recent impressive advances in Internet and web-based information and communication technologies (ICTs). For example, it makes it much easier for criminals to act beyond national boundaries to conduct their illegal affairs.

To understand cybercrime as a significantly new phenomenon with potentially profound consequences the editors argue it is necessary to recognise it as a constituent aspect of the wider political, social and economic restructuring currently affecting countries worldwide. These processes of globalisation are not only facilitated by the new ICTs but they also provide the opportunities for the profitable development of international information markets. Simultaneously, they raise the spectre of new criminal activities arising to exploit them. The very technologies which enable multinational corporations to do business more easily and challenge the individual controls and regulations of nation-states, also offer the prospect of globally organised criminal networks (Castells, 1996, 1998).

The aim of the book ‘to provide an understanding of the basic issues relating to cybercrime and its impact on society’ (p. xiii) appears modest. However, the contributors critically assess the discourse surrounding these views in a way that is intended to provide a perspective that both informs and helps raise the level of discussion regarding the effects of ICTs on law enforcement, security and privacy. Although this is much more ambitious and challenging talk it is one that is clearly risen to.

The book is structured into three parts: ‘Perceptions of cyber criminals: hackers, insurgents and extremist groups’; ‘Privacy, surveillance and protection’; and finally ‘Information warfare, critical national infrastructure and security’. As can be noted from these headings some may find the new language a little tiring but there is more to come, for example mail bombings, password sniffers, spoofing, phreaks, cookies, carding, etc. However, the responsibility for this is not with the contributors but sometimes such a large number of new terms can
be daunting and confusing. For example, ‘carding’ means something completely different for those who look inside telephone boxes in London’s West End!

The recent threat of cybercrime to affect international economies, security and social and political relations provides a serious challenge to the future roles and practices of law enforcement agencies and security services (p. 3). For those in positions of power to ignore such well-evidenced examples would be pure folly.

The examples include the McVeigh case regarding the Oklahoma bombing and an issue receiving more and more public concern, that of child abuse being distributed – sometimes live – over the Internet. The latter is an area where I undertake scholarship myself where children are abused via prostitution, and I therefore have to declare a special interest.

In Part I (Perceptions of cybercriminals ... ), the hacker is the main centre of attention. The law is often unable to deal with ‘bodiless’ or ‘non-corporeal’ crimes; the discourse here deals with the anxiety over technology and specific fears about loss of control of the body expressed through the theme of addiction (Thomas). Taylor, however, in his essay takes his control theme as the ambivalent status of the hacker, on the one hand being perceived as a group capable of resisting technological authoritarianism, whilst on the other arguably being a classic example of a group dominated by technology. In Part II (Privacy ...) different dimensions of secrecy are explored: which information, in what manner, how they are balanced with governments’ and law enforcement’s ability to deter and prosecute crimes as well as the individual’s rights to privacy and freedom from surveillance. ICTs often create problems for personal privacy so questions such as at what point and to what degree do those suspected or accused of crimes give up their right to privacy? Part III (Information warfare ...) addresses some of the most important and enveloping issues of cybercrime, those of politics, national security and ICTs. The essays examine how ICTs are fundamentally transforming the landscape of political expression and national security. Extreme forms of political expression and information warfare are examined. Whilst neither of these are new in themselves they both produce increased capabilities as well as new vulnerabilities.

For my part, the essays by Simone Fischer-Hubner and Peter Blume, with their emphasis on individual privacy, are the most intellectually interesting. They explore in different ways how regulation designed to protect citizens must not simultaneously protect criminals – an old conflict, individual privacy versus public protection recreated by new technology! The essay by Whine, however, regarding far–right extremists on the Internet, is probably the most worrying. National security matters are often ‘set piece’ affairs; far-right extremists on the Internet are another matter. When the work of Fischer-Hubner and Blume and Whine are juxtaposed we see some real advances in discourse and theorising, therefore a critical and informative contribution is made by this book. At the risk of being pedantic, I would argue that a fuller conclusion would have helped overall coherence. However, readers will welcome the extensive bibliography and thorough index. Finally, if this book had been read by George Orwell whilst simultaneously reflecting on Nineteen Eighty-Four, he may well have returned to a life of Down and Out in Paris and London!
The subject of promoting health must be one of the most important issues in social policy. But, as with television programmes, the emphasis and the excitement is always on illness. Research on subjects like cancer attract funding for services and research. Professionals like to work in high profile jobs like surgery and accident and emergency. The buzz of immediacy is the same in social work. What price the drama of abuse compared with the humdrum subject of preventing ill health? For older people, often marginalised in policy and practice, preventing ill health and promoting good health may mean the difference between staying at home and entering an institution. But they are not topics that spring instantly to mind as being the most exciting in social policy. As far as ageing is concerned, the author says ‘My argument is that although self health care is crucial to the maintenance of health and well-being, and has long been the most extensive and basic form of health care, its potential has been seriously neglected when considering later life’ (p. 1). Most gerontologists would agree with that.

It is a tribute to Miriam Bernard, although she does not address the key problems of how to raise the profile of the subject, that she does present revealing and often heart-warming data about it. The book is built around the research she did with the Beth Johnson Foundation in the mid 1980s. She apologises for the lateness of the findings but, in many ways, this gives her a chance to reflect on the wider policy implications in a more accepting climate. It is also a personal account of her journeys in gerontological research and how privileged she has felt herself to be in working with older people.

The first part of the book starts with the challenges of an ageing population. It then has three chapters which give an historical perspective of policies from the mid 1880s to the present day. The three health promotion strands have been health protection, prevention and education. The author adds preservation. The ability of people to engage in self health care depends on a number of factors. These include being able to gain access, get support, obtain information, make choices, develop skills, participate and achieve empowerment (p. 49). In chapter 4 some developments in self health care are described. These include four case studies, of which three are from North America and one from England.

The middle five chapters describe the various Beth Johnson programmes which the author helped to evaluate. These were a senior health shop, peer health counselling, a care line and other health related activities such as various courses. Researchers will be interested in the diagram which shows the kinds of ways in which these programmes were evaluated. It is in these chapters that we hear the voice of older people themselves. There are good pen pictures of these older people and excerpts from interviews with them. ‘I’ve started dancing’, ‘I took up yoga after coming here, and find it is good for my Parkinson’s disease’,
'I had wholemeal scones here and liked them so I now buy wholemeal flour not white flour.' About the senior health shop 'GPs are very busy, but you can call in any time here' Some of the older people were volunteers on the programme and the effect on their lives is given. It would be good to know what has happened subsequently to both the programmes and the older people. The final chapter draws together the threads of the fieldwork and recent developments. Lessons for policy and practice are given.

Miriam Bernard always writes clearly and interestingly and this book is no exception. It is well indexed and has seventeen pages of helpful references.

ANTHEA TINKER
King’s College London


I looked forward to reviewing this book. My anticipation was fuelled by my own on-going research into the activities of local authority social workers. In the course of this work I have been interviewing state social workers across northern England. My findings have been sobering. I have met many admirable social workers, deeply committed and experienced, who are now finding it almost impossible to do social work in any meaningful sense. Most are terribly demoralised and desperate to get out. The majority find their agencies inhospitable work places with managers who rarely acknowledge their skills and experience and impose change from above without hesitation. All are over-loaded with caseloads where the problems seem more intractable and serious than at any time in their experience. The work is unrelenting in its seriousness. Yet their agencies are, as a result of perpetual cuts, less able than ever before to help and instead have developed new systems and layers of control geared to rationing increasingly scarce resources. Not surprisingly, many of the social workers I have met over the past year are exhausted and angry about their situation, the poor quality of senior and middle management, and above all the plight of their clients. In many cases this combination of factors has made them sick, literally.

It was with their voices in mind that I started to read Social Work and Social Problems. I wondered what the book would say about this context of social work practice? What strategies might be offered? What would it say about social work practice in a society scarred by deepening inequalities and enduring poverty? And in particular, I wondered what it might say about the current prospects for social work, specifically in the British and North American contexts, where over the past twenty-five years the state has taken on a decidedly authoritarian stance when dealing with those who commonly fall into the ambit of social work agencies (see Jones and Novak 1999 where we discuss this disciplinary trajectory of the state).

Sadly, for me at least, none of these issues are raised, or even hinted at, by the three distinguished writers of this text. I looked in vain for any mention of the neo-liberal agenda which currently dominates Anglo-American capitalism. There is no engagement with the increasing social polarisation of American and British societies and the peculiar tendency of both these countries to use the prison and police systems to manage and control those most damaged and
excluded and to squeeze out social work in the process. There is similarly no discussion, or even suggestion, that state social work is being transformed by these developments, and the great strains and difficulties which have resulted for both social workers and their clients, and social service agencies. As a consequence I found the book somewhat unreal and deeply abstract, floating in some other space and time.

Yet, if one wanted to have a sense of what good social work practice might look like in a society where social workers and their agencies had the time, space and resources, and with a genuine mandate to combat individual distress and engage in social development towards a society rooted in social justice, then this book does have merit. Its observations and commentary on what makes for effective and respectful social work practice are often acute and telling. It has much of value to say about the micro skills of practice, of the importance of working with and alongside clients, the significance of partnerships and social networks, and of the necessity to be involved in social development and not just tied to individualised distress. For those who have responsibility for the teaching of social work skills on professional courses, I would not hesitate to recommend this book.

But, on the other hand, I remain wary of such social work texts – and there have been many over the past fifty years with social work – which do not connect with the actual realities of social welfare. We are living through a period of immense importance both nationally and locally, where despite all the official rhetoric and bluster, significant sections of the global population are being abandoned to the cruelties of neo-liberalism. It is a context in which those agencies and occupations such as social work which had been created in earlier times to offer some sort of remedial welfare service are now finding themselves being transformed and often deformed. The pain and dismay of such changes are there for anyone who cares to listen to any number of front line workers in public, social services, health, education, youth justice, and probation services amongst others. By all means let us consider what a good social work practice might look like, but surely we should not close our eyes and ears to what is actually going on in the process.


CHRIS JONES
University of Liverpool.


‘Unlike most values of the left or right, crime control seems to cut across the political spectrum’, argue Caplow and Simon in this somewhat disjointed range of analyses on prisons. Unfortunately, for those of us less addicted to the knee-jerk punitive response, punishment and prison, as Jack Straw and New Labour exemplify, remain despondently popular. So yet another book exploring ‘Prisons’ whilst needed, is likely to join those others sidelined as ‘academic’ rather than practical or useful in informing policy and/or practice. Still this book should not
be sidelined, for, despite its problems, it provides comprehensive detail upon American penal policy and practice. Its title may suggest a more general transnational evaluation, but the commissioning body, essentially the US Department of Justice, has resulted in its focus primarily being the USA. Some of the contributors also seem constrained in their critique, with an overall reluctance to be suitably critical of a society which can imprison imminently close on 2 million of its citizens. Thus Amnesty International’s reports condemning many US penal policies and broader issues of Human Rights abuses therein remain largely unexplored. The US penal industry, the exemplary Crime Control Industry (Christie 1993) is observed and described but the critiques offered lack the incisiveness the evidence invites.

I for one do not think it is either intellectually acceptable or accurate in the introductory chapter to argue ‘We are too close to our time to be able to look behind crime rates and punishment policies to understand why so many people are held in American prisons.’ But to then go on to conclude that same paragraph with a call for ‘increased investment in prison research’ seems to border on academic mendacity if such research allegedly can tell us little (Tonry and Petersilia p. 12–13).

Perhaps that is the essence of this type of ‘state’ funded source, for while it is undeniably academically rigorous in its methodology it explains and makes sense of little. It observes trends, for example: increases in recorded crime; increases in the numbers of offenders sentenced per recorded crime; longer sentences (particularly for drug related crimes which have been central in facilitating the huge expansion in the US prison population); and the disproportionate custodial sentences born by minority ethnic groups. But the authors generally prefer to detail and describe at the expense of the riskier and potentially more dangerous (at least in terms of future research funding) analysis and/or critique.

Covering an extensive range of subjects relevant to prisons such as: ‘Collateral Consequences’ (Caplow and Simon), ‘Prison Management Trends’ (Riveland), ‘Interpersonal Violence’ amongst prisoners (Bottoms), ‘Prison Suicide’ (Liebling), ‘Adult Correctional Treatment’ (Gaes et al.), ‘Medical Care’ (McDonald) and ‘Parole’ (Petersilia) the authors exhibit both their expertise and comprehensive research evidence. These articles should illuminate our understanding of the components of these complex issues. But some unfortunately too often simply irritate with their acritical use of language and evidence. This is typified in Gaes et al.’s assertions that ‘Adult correctional treatment is effective in reducing recidivism’ (to only 62 per cent? See Caplow and Simon p. 76) or that those ‘treatments’ that don’t work ‘need to be tailored to specific offender deficits’ (p. 361).

Blumstein and Beck’s detailed analysis of ‘Population Growth in US Prisons’ shows their excellent grasp of the minutiae of each change, but there is limited attempt to offer genuine analytical insight. Their conclusion, ‘We need to know’ (yet more?) (p. 58), before we can hazard a reasonable hypothesis exemplifies the dominant approach. This view is restated by Hagan and Dinovitzer who explore the ‘Collateral Consequences of Imprisonment’, concluding less than incisively that ‘A better understanding of these costs... requires a more systematic research base’ (p. 153). But exactly how much evidence is needed before we can reach a conclusion? This is not a debate that simply needs more empirical evidence. It is
a debate that needs to challenge not just the ineffectiveness of the punitive obsession, but also needs to state clearly that ‘the present penal system is making things worse, not better’ (Dehann 1991).

The chapter that does this best is Caplow and Simon’s ‘Understanding Prison Policy and Population Trends’. This is less weighed down by statistical detail and more prepared to discuss the wider political and ideological factors which have informed not just policy change but also the manufacture of, and acquiescence to, ‘popular’ demands for increased punishment.

All this said I can commend this book, it is an invaluable source in providing extensive detail on its subject, the US penal system. Perhaps its readers can utilise it to reach the conclusions that the evidence not just invites, but intellectually and morally demands.

LIAM McCANN
University of Lincolnshire and Humberside


Few scholars are as well equipped as Peter Baldwin to explore the hazardous terrain of comparative history. Impressively and enviably multilingual (so that flitting between archive sources in several different languages appears to be no problem), he also possesses the ability to distil complex material and provide succinct summaries of broad, unifying themes. Baldwin is nothing if not singular (Foucault gets only one mention), and has the courage to fashion original thematic interpretations. In his last book (The Politics of Social Solidarity, 1990), he examined the cross-national development of European welfare states, and offered some interesting and original conclusions. Now he has turned his attention to the spread of epidemics in several European societies broadly over the course of the nineteenth century.

The awful threat posed by the spread of contagious diseases in the nineteenth century – notably cholera, smallpox and syphilis – elicited a variety of responses from European nation-states. There were conflicting theories on the origins of epidemics and an equal variety of suggested solutions – contagionism versus localism, sanitationism versus quarantinism - and many bizarre experiments in epidemic control were tried and found wanting. This much is well known, but hereafter Baldwin strikes out on his own. He concludes that the varying medicoregulatory responses of European states reflected not so much their respective political regimes as geography/topography and the role of trade in each country’s economy. Hence Sweden and Greece, at opposite ends of the topographical spectrum, had markedly differing policy responses. The latter was typical of states with relatively little international trade, and thus it was more inclined towards the drastic, freedom-impinging policy of quarantinism. Baldwin thus suggests that his analysis leads to interestingly counter-intuitive conclusions. For example, autocratic regimes were least able to sustain prophylactic measures that intruded on their subjects’ liberties, since they lacked the popular legitimacy that supported more liberal regimes: in the battle for public health, citizen consent was everything.

Baldwin is, of course, at pains to reject anything that smacks of a whiggish,
triumph of knowledge’ explanation. As cholera spread northwards from India, it was met with a variety of responses and prophylactic measures. Some of these were plain daft. Others were drastic in the extreme: a cordon sanitaire might be placed round houses, which would include nailing doors and windows shut, and possibly would be even enforced by armed guards. Prussian efficiency involved the technique of steam-cleaning (and thus often destroying) the possessions of travellers. The first cholera pandemic to hit Britain, in 1831–2, produced widespread panic and no little political unrest. Until Koch’s (re)discovery of the comma bacillus in 1883, the waves of cholera caused a severe testing of the machinery of European states, and frequently forced them to take actions that were flagrantly at odds with their laissez faire ethos. Baldwin chronicles these responses to cholera and typhoid in admirable detail, adding much to what we already know about topics like vaccination and inoculation. Both came up against not only indifference, but strong resistance, with Britain having a powerful anti-vaccination movement.

The final one-third of the book is taken up with an excellent discussion of syphilis, which in the nineteenth century was a major public health problem in that it could affect one-tenth of adult males in large cities. The urgent need to contain its spread collided with all the taboos surrounding it – most notably, the acknowledgement that it was passed on through illicit sex. Some saw it as a punishment for sin, and thus opposed attempts to control its spread. Most often, the source of all venereal infections was prostitution; yet prostitution was one of the main props underpinning Victorian respectability. Accordingly, European states varied greatly in their regulatory responses: some tried legalising prostitution, under strict controls which confined it to specific areas (the main problem being the vociferous objections of local residents), while others tried to make transmission of syphilis a crime.

This is a very long, complex and challenging book, which demands close reading and will prove an invaluable source for historians of medicine. It is clearly written (if one excuses the occasional exotic metaphor) and magnificently researched. Only the best social policy undergraduates will tackle it – it is more a book for fellow researchers – but, if they do, they will be amply rewarded. There are, of course, sombre lessons to be learned from these pages. In the future, new epidemics may appear and may prove very difficult to eradicate. Given the inexorable increase in human travel round the world, and the importance of unfttered global economic activity, Peter Baldwin’s central thesis raises some uncomfortable prospects for the future.

JOHN MACNICOL
Royal Holloway,
University of London


This excellent and timely study, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, explores the links between begging, rough-sleeping and selling The Big Issue in
Edinburgh and Glasgow. Although beggars and rough-sleepers have become an all-too-familiar part of the urban landscape, we actually know very little about their characteristics, motivations and experiences. Three years ago, Hartley Dean organised a day conference for social researchers and the papers formed the nucleus of an edited collection that was published recently (Begging Questions, Dean, 1997). However, most of the research reported in that book is small scale and ethnographic and does not provide a systematic source of data on beggars or rough-sleepers.

Although Fitzpatrick and Kennedy’s study is itself quite small-scale, in that it consists of interviews with sixty-six people in two geographical locations, it does provide an invaluable data source, the best available to date, which can be brought to bear on a number of important questions. One such question is whether the beggars we encounter on the streets of our cities are hungry or homeless. The fact that begging forces each of us to assess what Michael Ignatieff has termed ‘the needs of strangers’ (The Needs of Strangers, Ignatieff M. 1984) is arguably what makes begging such a difficult phenomenon to deal with. Another question refers to who or what is responsible for the visible increase in begging on the streets, in particular whether responsibility should be placed at the feet of successive governments or is attributable to developments in society for which no government can be held responsible. A third question is whether selling The Big Issue is really any different from begging and whether becoming a vendor is an effective route out of begging, and a fourth is whether anything can be done, and if so what, to reverse the increased prevalence of street begging.

Based on in-depth interviews with twenty-four men and 9 women in both cities, their study reveals a high degree of overlap between begging, rough-sleeping and selling The Big Issue. Using an imaginative research design in which one third of the sample was recruited from those know to be engaged in street begging, another third from those known to be sleeping rough and a final third from Big Issue vendors, the study revealed a high degree of overlap between begging and rough-sleeping and, to a lesser degree, selling The Big Issue. Thus, almost all those interviewed had slept rough, four-fifths had begged and two-thirds had sold The Big Issue. Furthermore, people’s experiences of rough-sleeping almost invariably preceded their involvement in begging. It would appear to follow from this that the government’s commitment to eradicating rough-sleeping may turn out to be a most effective way of dealing with the problem of begging.

Nearly all of those interviewed had experienced severe trauma in their lives. Almost half had been in residential or foster care and over a quarter reported having parents who were addicted to alcohol or drugs. Many of the women, in particular, reported being abused as children. Many also had experiences of institutional living – two-thirds had been in prison, often for relatively minor offences like the non-payment of fines – and one-fifth had received psychiatric care. One-third reported that they were dependent on alcohol while one-fifth admitted to being heroin users. It was clear that many of them had developed these dependencies early in life as a means of coping with their problems. Few of them had any educational qualifications and, although four-fifths had some previous experience of employment, none was currently employed in a conventional job.

Begging is depicted in this study as a survival strategy. People resorted to beg-
ging out of sheer desperation and nearly everyone who begged did so until they had raised what they needed without attempting to maximise the amount of money that they could make. The majority of those engaged in street begging found it embarrassing and degrading, and, although they experienced acts of kindness from the public, were frequently harassed by members of the public, other street people and, particularly in Glasgow, by the police. Those who attempted to ‘make out’ in this way did so because by comparison with other unattractive means of making money, in particular shoplifting and prostitution, it was regarded as a lawful and ‘honest’ activity.

The study demonstrates that The Big Issue does provide a viable alternative to begging for some people, particularly in Edinburgh, where several people had ceased to beg after being introduced to the magazine. In Glasgow, on the other hand, many people used The Big Issue as a front for begging. Others returned to begging after selling The Big Issue because they could not make enough money from selling the magazine. Fitzpatrick and Kennedy attributed this to the much higher levels of intravenous heroin use among the Glasgow sample. This was itself explained in terms of the much more enlightened policy towards drug addicts in Edinburgh, where, unlike Glasgow, methadone programmes were widely available. This, and the more relaxed policy of the police in Edinburgh, shows that local strategies can make a difference.

Fitzpatrick and Kennedy’s research emphasises the multiple and interconnected needs of people on the streets. Most of those interviewed were keen to move away from begging and rough-sleeping but the complexity of the problems they faced means that they will need extensive support to achieve this. As well as access to appropriate accommodation and work opportunities, many street people require help to overcome alcohol and drug dependencies and with other problems associated with low self-esteem. Fitzpatrick and Kennedy conclude that this will require an integrated approach at national and local levels – a tall order perhaps but, to the extent that beggars are one of the most palpable symbols of social exclusion, one that will need to be taken very seriously, not least by a government which claims to be committed to combating social exclusion and promoting an inclusive society. Their exemplary study exemplifies the best in small-scale applied social research – Fitzpatrick and Kennedy have succeeded in overcoming the many difficulties involved in conducting research with, and on, social outcasts, and carried out a very well-designed and superbly executed study. Their clearly written, well-argued and humane report should be required reading for anyone who believes that understanding the manifestations of social exclusion is a necessary prerequisite to finding an effective solution to them.


MICHAEL ADLER
University of Edinburgh

The objectives of the book are clearly stated in the Preface: to ‘articulate the values that underpin the global development of social security; to explore global
social security patterns, recent developments and future issues; and to assess and rank social security programs and systems’. Without further elaboration the author addresses these three objectives by way of detailed taxonomies and definitional discussions on the one hand, and information on the empirical existence of particular schemes and provisions across the globe on the other. As a result, more than one third of the book is taken up by appendices in table format, country rankings, a very extensive bibliography of over 50 pages and the index.

In the first part (which would have benefited from more careful proof-reading and copy-editing), Dixon provides a detailed and largely technical account of definitions of social security. He discusses possible forms and permutations of programme strategies and characteristics such as eligibility, entitlement, administrative and financing. For those interested in social security law and administration this section might make useful complementary reading to legal textbooks. Dixon then proceeds to describe country and programme-specific information on social security strategies and displays these in table format. The author concedes that problems as to the categorisation of national programmes remain, but more fundamental questions remain open. Is there any real gain from the attempt to press fairly general information into a simple table which, as a result, seems to unduly obscure country-specific features? Is Cuba’s social security strategy, as the table indicates, really so similar to Germany’s, and is there really so little to distinguish between Italy’s, Iraq’s and Haiti’s social security profiles? At the expense of simplicity, perhaps more context seems to be required in order to dispel the impression that the table is more of an artefact than an indicator of meaningful cross-national similarities and differences.

Chapter 2 informs readers about different social security traditions and historical contexts which have informed social security ideas and institutional arrangements. For reasons that remain unexplained, the ‘marketisation’ tradition is given a disproportionately large space compared with the much briefer discussion of other traditions. Counting how many countries cover which type of risk, by which form of finance and which administration, chapter 3 informs readers about general patterns of social security development between the mid 1980s and the mid 1990s. The subsequent four chapters extend this in an even more detailed account of ways in which particular contingencies are covered in individual countries, with chapter 8 providing information about national administrative and financial arrangements. Overall, the discussion in chapters 2 to 8 draws on a wide range of literature, but adds little to it. The rather general and at the same time very brief conclusions to each chapter underline the book’s focus on descriptive accounts of national differences and similarities rather than pursuit of argument.

Only the final part of the book leaves the descriptive level when the author conducts an evaluative comparison between ‘design features’ of national social security systems on a global scale. Those features include benefit coverage, eligibility, provision, finance and administration. Based on a mixture of ILO and other, less obvious and not sufficiently justified criteria, certain characteristics are treated as either meriting bonus points or deductions. The ways in which criteria have been selected and operationalised has been subjected to only scant discussion. Nevertheless, the results feed into a composite index and form the basis for a league table, which ranks countries according to the extent to which their
systems are ‘acceptable’. This is an intriguing, but ultimately not convincing exercise since the table raises more questions than it provides answers. The so produced global ranking makes Australia’s social security appear to be the ‘most acceptable’ in the world. While this might be due to the somewhat questionable decisions in the process of producing the index (e.g., deducting points for contribution funding or for a complex administrative framework), rendering social security in Russia (sixth out of 172 countries) or Ukraine (twelfth) both as very ‘acceptable’ and superior to, for example, the Dutch system (thirty-third), does raise doubts as to the usefulness of the exercise in general, and the choice of indicators in particular.

Apart from the suggestion of this new (and questionable) form of country ranking, the book is not one which advances theory or analysis. Instead, its strength lies in the impressive, but at the same time somewhat overwhelming, assembly of factual information on the one hand and extensive bibliography on comparative social security on the other. As such the book is useful both as a reference source, and as a reminder of the complex nature of social security both in principle and in reality across the globe.

JOCHEN CLASEN
University of Stirling